



Ambassador's Activities

2013

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Speech by HE Bernard Emié,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

at the prize-giving ceremony for the “BD & Comics Passion” competition

Institut français, 31 May 2013

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cher Raymond Blanc,

Chers Paul Gravett and Alex Spiro,

Children,

I'm very pleased to see so many of you gathered here for the third edition of the BD & Comics Passion festival.

A little reminder first of all, if I may. Since it was created in 2011, this festival has welcomed the greatest comic book writers from both sides of the Channel, because Rosinski, Guy Delisle, Bryan Talbot, Bastien Vivès, Dave Gibbons, David B, Yves Sente and André Juillard have all come here, to mention but a few. And this year, as you know, we're lucky enough to be welcoming Régis Loisel, Posy Simmonds, François Boucq, Glen Baxter, Pénélope Bagieu, Laurent Verron and many other hugely talented artists.

Today, however, I want to pay tribute not to them but to you – you children, who are the other artists invited to this festival!

Indeed, a huge number of you – 600, I'm told! – took part in the competition organized this year, which had a very inventive theme, because you had to create a comic book in English or French or even both, recounting the adventures of your favourite dish – or, conversely, the one you hate most. And I notice that vegetables play quite a major role in your work, with an abundance of crazed, gangster or terrorist broccoli and cauliflower! I really do wonder why!

In total, the festival received more than 300 comic books from all four corners of the United Kingdom, created by children at school, at home, in groups and individually. All 300 works are highly imaginative, creative and funny, so I can well imagine how difficult the jury's decision was.

But I've been given the list of prizewinners, and my job today is to present them with their awards, which I'm very happy and proud to do.

So the jury's first prize goes to... Marin Inbona!

Marin, you really are unstoppable, because you already distinguished yourself last year in the competition organized by the South Ken Kids Festival. This time, your astonishing epic journey to a planet made of chocolate, the superbly scripted and drawn "Starship and Choc", has earned you... a job! The *Institut français* would in fact like to commission you to design the cover of its autumn term kids programme, a task usually done by a professional. Fifteen thousand copies of the programme will be published in August, and you'll even receive a (small) payment for this wonderful project. As a bonus, I'm pleased to present you with a very fine limited edition of "*Le Trésor de l'Ombre*", which you can have signed by François Boucq tomorrow!

The second prize goes to a group of three children, the authors of a positively hilarious bilingual comic book, "Bananarchist". So would Emilie Reineke, Vincent Marotte and Hubert du Chaxel, who are all 13 years old, please take to the stage? Emilie, Vincent and Hubert, congratulations! You've won a behind-the-scenes visit to the extraordinary publishing house Nobrow – led by Alex Spiro, who is here with us –, where a silk-screen

printing workshop will be organized specially for you. And here, as a bonus, are some exceptional books, including a comic book authors' bible by Paul Gravett, one of the greatest experts in the field, who I'm sure will sign it for you very shortly!

As for the third prize, I have the pleasure of awarding it to Alex Harvey, for the excellent and extremely funny *In-Veg-Ti-Ga-Tor!* Alex, you've come from Sussex to be with us today, and you take away a year's subscription to Cinebook, provided by M. Cadic. So every month you'll be receiving a top comic book from its catalogue, where the best of French and Belgian comic books can be found – obviously translated into English.

Finally, I'd like to announce that this year the festival has awarded a *Coup de Coeur* prize, a jury's choice prize, to a work that stands out due to the quality of its drawing and imagination. Please step up to the stage, Mya McCarthy! Mya, for your "Speedystar and the Dessert Planet", you've won what is no doubt today's most extraordinary prize: a cookery course at the Manoir des Quat' Saisons, that temple of gastronomy near Oxford, courtesy of my friend Raymond Blanc, whom I also thank!

Ladies and gentlemen, a big round of applause to the winners! I now hand over to the jury, who will tell you a little more about their choices./.